ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

In an operating system for a hydraulic valve clearance control element of an internal combustion engine, which includes a hydraulic fluid having a pressure that depends on the engine operating state and wherein the hydraulic clearance control element includes a pressure chamber in which a hydraulic fluid volume is maintained for adjusting the length of the hydraulic clearance control element and means for maintaining the fluid volume when, after engine shut down, the pressure of the hydraulic fluid supplied by an engine fluid pressure source drops below a certain value so as to maintain the hydraulic clearance control element at its operating length during engine shutdown, means are arranged on the hydraulic fluid supply line to the hydraulic valve clearance control element for releasing hydraulic fluid to reduce its pressure below the certain value immediately upon engine shut down to safely maintain the hydraulic clearance control elements at their operating length.